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Alternatives to neoliberal and managerialist organizing:

Inspirations from Zygmunt Bauman's humanistic sociology

There is much discussion amongst academics opposed to neoliberalism, capitalism and managerialism of alternatives to these regimes, all oppressive and similar and distinctive ways. Since the death of the dream of the communist revolution in the 1980s, a search for alternatives and ways of achieving them have proved fruitless. This book review essay reads Zygmunt Bauman's last book-length work, *Retrotopia* (2017), for inspiration for a way out of this ugly morass because *Retropia* ends with a call for specific actions to address the maladies of our contemporary condition.

One advantage of this book is that rather than using such over-used terms as 'neoliberalism' and 'managerialism' Bauman diagnoses some of the precise ills of our time. These include pervasive and increasing inequalities, loneliness, isolation and ontological insecurity. He argues that we (he uses 'we' throughout so I will follow his lead) seek escape from all that assails us today via retrotopia, or 'visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past' (p. 51). We project these visions into the future, imagining them to be desired states we wish to achieve (again). Of these he discusses three: Hobbes, tribes, and the womb. He shows how such retrotopia never really existed: they are based on myth rather than factual history. Nevertheless, we embellish these mis-remembered pasts, making them seem glorious, unflawed, perfect. Our dreams of

[1] All page numbers of quotes refer to Bauman (2017)

building futures that mirror these longed-for pasts render us passive – we do little except wait for the return of those fabulous (that is, based on fable) golden ages. Rather than despair at the futility of such dreaming Bauman concludes with a call not to arms but to dialogue, with the aim of 'lifting human integration to the level of all humanity' (2017, p. 167).

My task in this review essay is to apply the theory of retrotopia to organizations, to explore how Bauman offers a way out of the neoliberal, managerialised present. I use a case study, the much-researched relationship between management and the professions, to explore how the theory of retrotopia gives us new insights into those difficult relationships, and I will suggest how an understanding of these half-hidden retrotopia may instigate ways of developing more healthy working relationships. The way forward will involve taking seriously Bauman's call for what I recognise as micro-revolutions, in which each organizational participant takes responsibility for engaging in dialogue with just one member of their organizational Other. With such small movements we may perhaps start the work of 'lifting human integration' out of the grasp of profit/efficiency focused organisations. Firstly I summarise Bauman's theory of retrotopia.

Retrotopia

The contemporary situation of liquid modernity, Bauman (2017) writes, is one in which dreams of a better future have died. Objectively, inequalities are extending, the rich becoming ever richer while welfare states are retrenching. The present is one in which the centre no longer holds and a sense of existential security is absent. Societal politics are 'subsidiarized' to 'the level of individually run "life politics"' (p. 98), and individual lives

are experienced as ‘a factory of mutual suspicion, antagonism of interests, rivalry and strife’ (p. 98). Subjectively, a ‘sort of “free-floating” .. ambience of deprivation’ ensues, where ‘I’ feel always in some way deprived of what it is I want and need. The (fearful) stranger is at the door, and the individual has lost any sense of collectivism as they become not only the producers of commodities but the commodities themselves. Everyone is a rival, in an era when narcissism is normative and ‘We are .. being forcefully pushed …. back, to the early nineteenth century … of a war of all against all’ (p. 120).

Thus the teleological journey that promised continuous improvement in the human condition has been reversed: the future is now so full of uncertainty and instability that it promises to be Hell. Paradise, in this world turned upside down, is found in a mythical, invented past where we imagine that security and stability, rather than precarity and constant change, reigned. If this sounds fanciful, a glimpse at various news media reveals such an imagination at work in the Britain of 2017. For example, the ‘generation wars’i assume ‘baby boomers’ (people born in the decade or so after the end of the Second World War) received grants to go to university so were able to graduate debt-free, after which they easily found interesting, well-paid and secure work that allowed them to purchase their first homes at a young age. They are now heading for a secure retirement on generous pensions. In contrast their children and grand-children pay large fees for their university education, struggle to buy a house and can see no secure retirement in front of them. Not only do such prognostications place the blame for contemporary ills on a group of people rather than the governments and organisations that fostered contemporary ills, they also forget in this dream of the past is that only a small proportion

of the population, from the higher ranks of the middle classes, went to University, that jobs available to the vast majority could be dangerous (e.g. coal mining), tedious (e.g. factory production line jobs) and poorly paid, and that the houses many scrimped and saved to afford had no central heating, often no bathroom or indoor toilet, and they lacked most of the conveniences that are almost taken-for-granted in the second decade of the 21st century. But it is the fantasy of that supposed golden past that critics of the baby-boomer generation wish to rebuild.

Bauman shares with other thinkers (see, for instance, such psychoanalytical theorists as Benjamin, 1998; 2013) an understanding of the human condition as one in which the desire for freedom collides with the desire for security, where the yearning to belong is in tension with a yearning to stand out (p. 27). The 'back to the future' dreams of retrotopia presume that, in this now lost Paradisical past, these irreconcilable yearnings were reconciled and there was both security and freedom. We thus look to a particular past where we believe that that paradise was found and, through dreaming of how to (re)build it, we project it into a future we wish to inhabit. This is, Bauman writes (p. 9) 'conscious attempts at iteration, rather than reiteration, of the status quo ante', because the images of the past have become modified through 'the process of selective memorizing, intertwined with selective forgetting' (ibid). Bauman identifies and discusses three particular retrotopia: Hobbes' Leviathan, tribes, and the womb.

With regard to the first of these, he argues that the state has, since Hobbes' arguments about its place as Leviathan, been held responsible for 'the civilizing process', keeping humankind's inborn cruelty under control. The state is now regarded as failing in this task: it is disintegrating in the era of uncontrollable globalisation and no longer has the

power to keep the sinister and gory nature of the human animal securely in check. Neoliberalism has freed humankind from the tethers that had previously constrained its darkest desires, and injected fear and violence into lives and into politics (p. 19). The disintegration of state power is assisted by the rise of gigantic, footloose corporations that are bigger than entire countries (Crouch, 2004), while uncontrollable globalization breeds 'planet-wide interdependence'. In such conditions, power becomes emancipated from territory such that there is seen a 'progressive globalization of power coupled with continuing locality of politics' (p. 22). The frustrations of powerlessness breed autotelic violence in populations – violence for the sake of violence - although violence takes other forms, such as competition for the best school and university places, the best jobs, best cars, and so on. Societies appear to resemble again the pre-Leviathan condition of a war of all-against-all conducted against no-one in particular.

Thus appears a desire for a Hobbesian Leviathan that will restore order and thus control again the nightmares of the id given free reign.

The second retrotopia Bauman identifies is a new wave of tribalism. He quotes Celia de Anca approvingly (p. 52) 'The main change of paradigm we are witnessing is a shift from a longing for independence from a society made up of communities, to a longing for belonging to a society made up of individuals'. This arises from the realisation that individuality and the emancipation of one's subjectivity, ostensibly so alluring, has brought with it individual insecurity. Of specific relevance to management and organization studies is Bauman's observation that the deregulated labour market has nurtured the requirement for open-ended commitment to a 'community' that offers no such commitment in return. Further, the advent of the internet has allowed organizations

to recruit staff who feel they must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year, even though they are not specifically or overtly required to be constantly available. An aspect of this intensified control is the felt need to belong to a tribe, with the company now taking the place of the tribe, so we cling more and more tightly to our employers even as we seek independence from the demands of the daily grind, resulting in our being constantly available to them and ever more tightly controlled.

The retrotopia of tribalism is, Bauman argues, predicated upon a fear of strangers. It is nurtured by politicians who, paralysed by globalisation's crippling of the military, economic and cultural 'legs' on which sovereignty had depended, have 'little to offer to their electors except "consciousness of the unity" rooted in a distant and murky past' (p. 77) of a secure 'us' and a distant 'them'. Mass migration means that those who used to be a long, long way away now live in our local communities, bringing 'the worldwide turbulence with all its demons, literally, home' (p. 79). In line with much poststructural, feminist and queer thinking, Bauman understands the need for this 'other' as an 'indispensable tool.. in the job of self-identification' (p. 83), because for there to be a 'we' or an 'I' there is a need for an other who, as a not-we or a not-I, proves to me that I exist. But Bauman adds to this familiar argument the understanding that there is, alongside this need for the other/Other, a yearning for an imaginary time where no such invasive other/Other existed.

The third of the retrotopia explored by Bauman is the womb. Arguing that loneliness is foundational to contemporary cultures, Bauman explores how the inescapable fact of having been born plunges individuals into such a dreadful present that one wishes one had never been born. This is articulated not through a wish that one had never been

conceived, but a desire for the security of the womb. In the womb-like spaces we attempt to create, we are warm and cosy but isolated, lonely, afraid to venture out, and we lack the vital recognition of our existence that comes from interactions with others.

Bauman weaves these retrotopia together when he writes that 'The "back to tribes" and "back to the womb" phenomena' are 'two powerful tributaries to the forceful "back to Hobbes" current'. They originate from the same source: fear of a future that is 'embedded in the exasperatingly capricious and uncertain present' (p. 152). These fears, it can be seen, breed passivity rather than action, or willing control rather than resistance.

However, Bauman's conclusion, or rather his epilogue to this book, offers a way out of this unlivable present. He looks to the birth of what, borrowing from a writer called Huntingdon, he calls 'the birth of "cosmopolitically integrated humanity' (p. 164), and he sees a way forward in a talk given by Pope Francis advocating 'the capacity for dialogue' (p. 164). This involves learning how 'to fight the good fight of encounter and negotiation' (ibid). It involves what feminists would recognise as micro-revolutions (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Thomas and Davies, 2005) in face-to-face encounters where the recognition that is vital to flourishing (Butler, 1997) is given and received. We hoi polloi as Bauman calls us, each have a duty to engage in what Habermas (1990) would understand as discourse ethics: a duty to engage in talk with others that involves not mere talking but careful and attentive listening. It is not the duty of politicians or other appropriators of our individual powers to lead us passively towards such active interactions, rather it is encumbent upon each and every individual to engage in dialogue and thus to lift 'human integration to the level of all humanity' (p. 167).

Organizational retrotopia

There is something very persuasive about these arguments, and about management and organisations' role in both perpetuating and feeding off the uncomfortable present. How then could Bauman's theory of retrotopia offer alternatives to current systems of management, leadership and organising that would lead to revolutionary change? My reading of *Retrotopia* leads me to advocate the sort of dialogue that Bauman, following Pope Francis, recommends, but for those of us schooled in management and organisation studies we will understand that dialogues need careful preparation. That is, they require a preparatory stage in which the parties to the encounter should be intent upon exploring each other's particular retrotopias. I suggest this because I suspect that conflicting and contradictory retrotopia are foundational to some, if not many, organizational conflicts that are fuelled by contemporary mis-management. Within those never-existing utopia may be found some of the reasons for conflict rather than co-operation, for finding ways of making colleagues' lives hellish rather than tolerable. I will use as a case study health organisations, and in particular management and the professions within those organisations, with a specific focus on the medical profession. Following Buaman's inspiration, I will explore how retrotopia are constitutive of the identities of each party, how the contradictions between each's retrotopia prevent fruitful dialogue, and how through focused listening and alertness to one's own desires as well as that of the other a way may be found that allows for active speaking and listening.

But first, a definition of terms.

<u>Definitions: managerialism and neoliberalism</u>

Managerialism is nothing more and nothing less than a belief that organization is impossible without managers who ensure that all other actors conform with organizational law (Pollitt, 1990). There is something Hobbesian about this assumption, as it rests upon an understanding that, without managers, there will be chaos (Harding, 2004). It is assumed, sometimes explicitly, that 'soldiering' will be rife as staff seek to do as little work as possible; patients will remain untreated as medical and nursing staff pursue expensive care and cures that threaten to bankrupt health services; academics will spend scarce funds on research that interests them rather than research that has 'impact', and so on. Managerialism has a low regard for any staff other than managers: managers are selfless, others selfish. Management is necessary to ensure that the 'selfish' pursuits of inherently feckless staff are kept in check and organizational viability assured.

Neoliberalism is understood as the percolation of economization within and through spheres previously regarded as separate and distinct from markets and economics (Harvey, 2003). It is, in Brown's (2015, p. 30) definition, 'an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life' (ibid). One is expected to comport one's self in ways that maximise one's capital value both in the present and the future. This is achieved 'through practices of entrepreneurialism, self-investment, and/or attracting investors' (Brown, 2015, p. 22). The self in neoliberal times is therefore a project that has to be managed. Not only does that self work for a firm, it becomes a firm in itself, devoted to maximising its human capital. Its psyche and the capillaries and cells of its body are penetrated by capitalism. Neoliberalism is thus understood as a 'culture' that provides the organizing metaphors for

whole spheres of life (Couldry, 2010). It is a 'mobile, calculated technology for governing subjects who are constituted as self-managing, autonomous and enterprising (Gill and Scharff, 2011, p. 5), and also 'rational, calculating and self-motivating' (ibid). Contradictions are relished: one is 'exhorted to make sense of their individual biographies in terms of discourses of freedom, autonomy and choice – no matter how constrained their lives may actually be' (op cit, p. 6). Neoliberalism is enhanced through its capacity to produce active subjects who are 'artefacts' rather than architects of neoliberalism (Larner, 2003).

At first sight neoliberalism and managerialism appear contradictory: if neoliberalism produces self-governing subjects then there should be no need for a management that ensures staff conform with organizational rules and regulations, because management should have been internalised and staff should be striving to constitute selves that will prove attractive products to 'sell' to employers. Yet the co-existence of the two suggests that projects of the self may not necessarily conform with organizational requirements, hence management is presumed necessary in order to ensure staff constitute themselves in the form of the objects required by the organization. Further, managers are themselves neoliberal subjects, so it is encumbent upon them to constitute managerial selves that are imbricated, through and through, with economic theories of their own value. This suggests that managers may labour under the apprehension that the only true neoliberal individual is their own selves, and they prove their value through remedying the failures of neoliberal control mechanisms. It is within such contradictions that possibilities for resistance and change may be found.

The case study

Management, the medical profession, managerialism and neoliberalism

The continuing antipathy between management and the professions may be located in just such a context: the workings of power have dictated that the selves crafted by professional staff are in conflict with organizational requirements, so management is deemed necessary to control this deviance. The professions tend not to bow willingly to the imposition of managerial rules upon their work. To tease out the implications of Bauman's theory of retrotopia for challenging neoliberalism and manageralism I will focus on the case study of the medical profession and management. The UK's National Health Service's (NHS) move from a professionally- to a managerially-governed organization began with the Griffiths Report (1983) which argued the need for more management in the NHS. The subsequent attempts to introduce management, and the medical profession's response, has been much studied, but Bauman's theory of retrotopia provides new insights into the continuing struggles for control between managers and doctors.

Briefly, for 40 years from its foundation in 1948, the NHS was organized by senior members of the medical, nursing and administrative professions to an agenda dominated by medicine (Harrison, 1982), but always within policies determined by government, for the NHS is something of a political football. By the 1980s the government view of the medical profession was that it was out of control and reckless in its use of resources (Harrison, 1999a; 1999b; Larkin, 1995; Iedema et al, 2003; Learmonth, 2003). The resulting government-initiated changes in the 1980s heralded the managerialisation of health services, whereby not only were managers to replace administrators and have

precedence over medicine, the culture of the NHS was to change to one where medical logic became subservient to managerial logic (Pollitt, 1990).

The objective was that doctors were to be co-opted into managerial modes of thinking (Hunter, 1992): they should internalise the audit culture's managerial gaze and become governable (Flynn, 2004), thus ceding control over their work to management (McKinley and Arches, 1985; Elston, 1991). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the medical profession did not acquiesce readily, and the resulting struggle for control is well-documented (Newman, 2001; McLaughlin et al, 2002; Learmonth, 2003; Loughlin, 2004; Currie et al, 2010). The medical profession continues to find ways of resisting managerial efforts at control, including institutional work through which they co-opt other professions and reframe arguments that threaten to undermine their position (Currie et al, 2012). The medical profession's allegiance to its traditional values of professional autonomy, self-regulation and a focus on individual patients remains unchanged, as does management's values of focusing on systems, resource allocation, accountability and, finally, populations rather than individuals (Edwards, Marshall, McLellan and Abbasi, 2003).

However, although these and similar analyses of the antagonistic doctor/manager relationship embed it within theories of managerialism, and indeed use the case of the NHS to develop understanding of managerialism (e.g. Pollitt, 1990) they ignore the wider context, that is, of neoliberalism. Indeed, the sociology of the professions has done little to explore professional identities (Currie, Finn and Martin, 2010), let alone the fusion of economics with identities found in theories of neoliberalism.

Yet the three decades since management was introduced into the NHS have seen profound changes in which *doing* management and medicine has been superseded by *being* managers and doctors (Harding, 2004), as neoliberalism's imperative that one works on one's self as a product to sell in the organizational market has gained dominance. In such circumstances values are not so much standards that define how one should act, but are discourses that inform the constitution of the self. Before neoliberalism's impact a doctor who did not focus on, say, the individual patient rather than the population, would have been a doctor whose practice may have been poor; now that person's very identity as a doctor is destabilized if s/he does not conform with the regulatory norms that were previously assumed to be 'values'. This applies in equal measure to managers. In other words, what were once values are now constitutive norms (Butler, 1990; 1993).

It may even be that antipathy toward the other is itself a constitutive norm. As Bauman (above) and others have argued, there is a need for an other that is so different from me that I can know myself through that difference, through what is 'not me'. But recall also Bauman's argument of a return to the tribe. If we think of the professions and management as tribes, then that sense of being an individual who belongs to a specific tribe provides reassurance, in an era of ontological insecurity, against the disappearance of the self. Following Bauman (2017) we can argue that the very concepts of 'management' and 'the professions' have shifted since the Griffiths Report's publication, from concerns with productivity and profit or advancing and protecting members' interests, into concepts of belongingness and identities that offer some form of ontological security.

In summary, this brief history of the introduction of managerialism into the NHS resembles Hobbes' *Leviathan*: again the State intervenes to prevent a descent into chaos, but this time through its agents, managers, who will, it is believed, impose order and control. The history that followed is of battles for control between parties with conflicting values and belief systems. Through locating these battles within the context of neoliberalism's imperatives, another dimension to these struggles can be seen: one has to be a manager or a doctor rather than doing management or practicing medicine. What were values become constitutive norms, as managers and doctors strive to constitute selves that will remain valuable products in the health service marketplace. Were either party to cede control to the other then their very identities would be threatened, and, indeed, the three decades of struggle for control may have altered the terms of identity-formation, with their mutual antipathy forming part of their identity work.

Management, the medical profession and retrotopia

But this analysis of our case study remains at too abstract a level. It leaves the two parties battling each other for the sake of maintaining the status quo (albeit oppositional status quos), rather than for the achievement of some imagined and dreamed for future goal. Theirs is a violence that is, to borrow Bauman's description, autotelic. We could leave the parties struggling for dominance and the maintenance of fragile identities, but Bauman's arguments do not allow that: there must be a way beyond this struggle of all against all. Through following Bauman's arguments further we may discern a path out of this treacherous thicket, that is, we need to go beyond the simple struggle for control itself and understand some of the subterranean influences that nurture continuing conflict. Bauman's theory of retrotopia, in its exploration of suffering subjectivities seeking

respite in a future modelled on an imaginary past, suggests the value of understanding the forms of retrotopia circulating within this case study, to understand their contribution to the continuing antagonisms within this particular relationship.

Firstly, what shape does a managerial retrotopia take? I suggest this can be found in the chapters on 'the history of management thought' contained in many management textbooks. There, future managers are introduced to the seemingly heroic insights of F.W Taylor in his development of scientific management. The promise of scientific management, even though it was not to be borne out, was that managers could extract more worker effort at least cost, to the benefit not only of shareholders, managers and customers, but also workers themselves. This will happen only if managers are not resisted: the heroic Schmidt, chosen by Taylor as someone who exemplified the ideal worker who conforms with management wishes, surrendered his powers of self-direction to the manager.

The elevation of Taylor to one of the founding fathers of management is somewhat peculiar: the earlier editions of management textbooks listed him as only one thinker amongst many others who had been actively cogitating about management in the first half of the twentieth century. However, between the 1950s and the 1970s discussions of most of Taylor's contemporaries disappeared from textbook pages, and Taylor was given the crown of the original thinker about management (Harding, 2004). This elevation is not innocent: it suggests processes in play in which a cultural unconscious (Jameson, 2013) peeks through into consciousness. In light of Bauman's theory of retrotopia, could it be that the selection by textbook writers of F.W.Taylor's Scientific Management as foundational to management is significant because it offers management a vision of an

ideal past that it projects into the future? That is, the textbooks' message, distorted through the prism of the yearning for retrotopia, is that there was once a perfect situation in which managers were trusted and obeyed unquestioningly, and as a result everyone benefited. The critique and subsequent half-forgetting of Taylorism does nothing to undermine the illusionary promise of what was always mythical. The government that introduced management into the NHS certainly seems to have believed in the seductive promise of managerial control. But, as Bauman indicates, that belief, projected into a future in which this seemingly perfect past is rebuilt, influences present conduct. Management's retrotopia, I am suggesting, is one which informs managers that they have more than a duty or a right to manage: it is their moral responsibility to impose their will upon others so that everyone can flourish.

The medical profession's retrotopia contradicts management's hugely. As the sociology of the professions has long shown, the medical profession exemplifies the professions' beliefs about their own place in the scheme of things. That is, each profession possesses a body of knowledge that, used wisely, contributes to the flourishing of societies. Professional practice (in this myth) is selfless, dedicated to using its specific knowledge base for the benefit of society and not for the pursuit of riches or self-aggrandisement. Any external imposition upon its freedoms to practice to the best of its abilities is illegitimate because it is based upon an inadequate knowledge base, and unless resisted will result in an impoverishment of society generally. Until the last quarter of the twentieth century the professions were able to govern themselves with little interference. They took responsibility for dealing with any deviance from their own professional

norms, and ensured the licensing of practitioners was limited to those who had demonstrated their proficiency at acquiring the requisite degree of knowledge.

That, I suggest, is a summary of the past that the medical profession desires to recreate. It is mythical: the sociology of medicine and various medical scandals showed how flawed were these systems of self-belief; and how they articulated desires rather than described realities. But the medical profession continues to seek ways of evading managerial control, as noted above, suggesting it continues to resist any impingement on its capacity for self-governance.

Seen through the lens of Bauman's theory of retrotopia, the underpinning rationale for the continued resistance of the medical profession to management lies in its dreams of not only upholding the norms of professional medical practice against managerial challenges, but also of the profession's return to an era when they feel sure they were (and once again will become) free of managerial interference or power struggles.

The imprint of neoliberalism can be seen embedded within both retrotopia. If management cannot manage then it is, by definition, not management at all. The capacity of managers to become self-crafting, lucrative sellers of the very managerial selves they constitute therefore requires that they believe in their own powers and skills, hence the retrotopic dream of their having complete control over the medical profession is nurtured by neoliberalism. Similarly, a profession is not a profession unless it is self-governing and in charge of its own knowledge-base. Doctors who ceded governance of medical practice to managers would not therefore be professional doctors, but skilled workers responsible to managers.

Discussion and conclusion

This book review essay may seem to have travelled a long way away from Bauman's last book, but the highways and by-ways of the case study have, I hope, illuminated *Retropia*'s value as a tool of analysis. Firstly, he suggests, analyse the present. Here, health services face ever-increasing demands, expectations and costs. It could be imagined that the doctor/management 'wars' contribute to this increasing complexity as efforts are expended on control and resistance rather than on bringing out the best contribution from each 'side'. Secondly, anticipate a desirable future that goes beyond the present difficult situation but does not look to an imaginary past. In this example, there could be benefits to health services and the populations they serve if managers and doctors could work more closely together, with managers facilitating doctors' work rather than governing it. Thirdly, look at how mythical pasts may be informing the present situation and exacerbating it. This case study has suggested this is impossible because each 'side' dreams of its own importance. Each is seeking to build a future in which it dominates the other, as it imagines it has done in the past, and each is utterly convinced of the benefits to individuals and societies of their achieving these desired futures in which the other bows beneath its power.

The power of the analytical tool of *retropia* bequeathed to us by Bauman is that it takes us beyond the realm of imagining the power struggles between doctors and managers as little more than the battle for dominance of territory, as has been argued in the past. Rather, the application of Bauman's theory suggests each side may be utterly convinced that it is fighting on the side of justice, right and goodness. Each shares the goal of

providing the best possible health service within available resources, but each sets up the conditions that make its desires impossible to achieve.

The challenge therefore is how to enable these warring parties to abandon their antipathy for the other so as to work together to achieve the shared goal. This is where we come to Bauman's fourth point: how to move forward. He argues that this is possible through dialogue that will achieve what feminist authors have called 'micro-revolutions'. That is, rather than seeking to achieve revolutionary change, with the promise of revolution requiring an effort so gargantuan that it is put off into the ever-receding future, each person takes responsibility for opening themselves to talk with and listening actively to an individual from the 'other side'. Through getting to know each other's dreams, values, philosophies, influences and aspirations, the other becomes familiar, someone to whom one can relate. Such explorations allow development not only of understanding of the other but of self-understanding too, especially in regard to the norms and powers that envelope one and limit one's space for freedom and action. If these micro-revolutions were to work, then neoliberalism would be threatened by actors who refused to conform to its constraints: they would no longer see themselves as products with a financial value but as contributors to individual and societal flourishing. Managerialism too disappears, for its dream of total control is shown to be futile as those in dialogue come to recognize and respect each other, and to work towards finding ways of working together.

I therefore recommend Bauman's last book that outlines a theory of retrotopia for the invaluable analytical tool it provides that will assist in getting to the hidden architectonics of forms of neoliberal organizational violence. It provides us with a blueprint of how to

dismantle the misplaced dreams that inhibit the very societal, organizational and individual flourishing that are yearned for.

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Explore the retrotopia that underpins management to add to Bauman's list, and then the retrotopia of academia and the professions. How can we engage in dialogue when our thoughts, feelings and identities are caught up within these constitutional discourses, albeit that they are myths, that inform how we understand each other? How can we develop that dialogue that allows talking with each other rather than over each other? This needs rethinking the concept of Organization and of Work, to develop perhaps one that we can all identify with.

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[i] See, for example, http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/millenials-generation-x-baby-boomers-a7570326.html, accessed 29th October 2017.